



RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT
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***Tenth Annual Event Features New Report:
RlTe Care Results in Improved Health Outcomes for Children and Families***

Governor-elect Chafee to Attend Celebration of Children's Health

Providence, RI – More than 150 community leaders will gather for the tenth annual *Celebration of Children's Health*. The event brings leaders together each year to celebrate the progress the state has made in achieving positive health outcomes for Rhode Island's children and to commit to working toward health insurance coverage for all children. The luncheon will be held on **Monday, November 15, 2010 from 12:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Providence Marriott**, located on the corner of Charles and Orms Streets.

Governor-Elect Lincoln Chafee will attend Rhode Island KIDS COUNT's *Celebration of Children's Health* and provide remarks. *Covering Kids* awards will be presented to elected officials and community partners for their contributions to increase access to health insurance for children. Lt. Governor Elizabeth Roberts, Senate President M. Teresa Paiva Weed, and Representative Frank Ferri will receive awards. Community leaders receiving *Covering Kids* awards are Jorge Cardenas, founder of the Back to School Celebration of Rhode Island, Zulema Gonzalez, a Family Resource Counselor at Providence Community Health Center who helps families navigate the RlTe Care application process, and Dr. Pablo Rodriguez who has worked tirelessly to ensure that children and families have health coverage.

At the event, Director David Gifford of the Rhode Island Department of Health, Commissioner Deborah Gist of the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Secretary Gary Alexander of the Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services will accept the "Connecting Kids to Coverage Challenge" recently issued by Secretary Kathleen Sebelius of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Secretary Sebelius challenged states to take the steps needed over the next five years to enroll the five million children across the nation who are income-eligible for health coverage through Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) but who remain uninsured.

“As Rhode Island moves to implement national health reform by 2014, we must build on RItE Care’s successful and cost-effective delivery system. There are just over 14,000 Rhode Island children who are income-eligible for RItE Care but who remain uninsured. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT accepts Secretary Sebelius’ Connecting Kids to Coverage Challenge because we know that when Rhode Island children are covered, we all win,” stated Bryant.

According to the most recent Census data, there are 19,675 uninsured children in Rhode Island, 7.7% of all children under age 18. Almost three-quarters of these uninsured children are eligible for RItE Care based on family income. This is 14,457 uninsured children who live in families with income under 250% of the federal poverty level, the eligibility level for RItE Care for children. More than nine out of ten (92.2%) Rhode Island children under age 18 have health insurance coverage. Two-thirds of these children are covered through employer-sponsored health insurance plans and about one-third are covered through RItE Care/RItE Share.

Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, stated, “RItE Care has long been a national model for how to cover kids and families with affordable coverage and access to quality health care. Rhode Island has seen the rewards of investing in RItE Care through improved health outcomes for children, parents and pregnant women.” At the event, Rhode Island KIDS COUNT will release a new report, *RItE Care Results*, which details the following positive health outcomes that have been achieved by RItE Care:

- Children and adults enrolled in RItE Care have the **lowest percentage of emergency admissions** to the hospital (27% of admissions for children and adults with RItE Care, compared with 82% of admissions for children and adults who are uninsured).
- **Preventable hospitalizations** are much lower among children with RItE Care coverage compared with those who are uninsured (10% for those with RItE Care coverage, compared with 22% for uninsured children).
- Parents enrolled in RItE Care have **low rates of preventable hospitalizations** (6% for parents with RItE Care coverage, compared with 17% for uninsured adults).
- **Fewer women enrolled in RItE Care smoke during pregnancy** now than when the program began in 1993 (32% in 1993 compared to 17% in 2008).

- The percentage of women enrolled in RIte Care with **short intervals between births is nearly the same as women enrolled in private insurance** (29% of women with RIte Care coverage and 30% of women with private coverage have less than 18 months between one child and the next).
- **Fewer Rhode Island babies are dying in the first year of life**, with infant mortality rates dropping among publicly-insured infants since RIte Care began (declining from 9.8 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 2003 to 6.7 per 1,000 in 2008).
- Following national trends, the **low birthweight rate for infants enrolled in RIte Care has increased** between 1993 and 2008 (from 8.6% to 9.3%), but this increase was less than the increase in low birthweight for infants born to women with private insurance in Rhode Island (which increased from 5.3% to 6.9%).
- **Children, parents, and pregnant women with no health insurance experience negative health outcomes in all of these areas.**

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Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is a statewide children's policy organization that works to improve the health, economic well-being, education, safety and development of Rhode Island's children.